

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION  
OF THE SHIPWRECK OF THE TANKER "MARIUPOL"

February 19, 1946

The Union of Soviet  
Socialist Republics  
Prosecution Department.

The USSR Sea and River Fleet  
Chief Military Prosecutor  
Moscow

To Comrade Golunsky, Procurator for Soviet Union at the Inter-  
national Military Tribunal in Tokyo.

Report  
on the results of the investigation into the shipwreck of the tanker  
"Mariupol".

By the inquiry into the shipwreck of the tanker "Mariupol" con-  
ducted by the prosecution department of the Pacific basin, the following  
facts were established:

The tanker "Mariupol" was sailing in November 1943 from the United  
States of America to the Soviet Union with a cargo of 8901 tons of  
Iso-octane. While passing through the First Kurilsky strait on November  
14, 1943 at 18.04 hours in the territorial waters of Japan near the  
cape Kotanari-Saki at the point-Latitude 50° 48 m. north, long-  
titude 156° 31 m. east the tanker ran onto rocks.

The tanker "Mariupol" remained at the place of the shipwreck till  
January 23, 1944, and help being not rendered, the ship and 9700 tons  
of cargo were lost.

The commanding authorities of the Far Eastern Sea-Fleet having  
received the report from the shipwrecked tanker immediately sent the  
tankers "Tuapse", "ERIVAN" and other vessels, which were not far from  
the First Kurilsky strait, to the area of the shipwreck. The tanker  
"Tuapse" of great cargo capacity arrived at the area of the shipwreck  
2 hours after the incident had taken place and had actual possibility  
to render help to the tanker "Mariupol" by completely unloading it and  
towing it from the rocks.

To approach the tanker "Mariupol" the Soviet ships had to get  
permission from the Japanese government. This permission was given  
when 35 days had passed since the shipwreck, and the wrecked ship was  
already in a hopeless condition, as its hull was damaged by the winter  
storms. The greater part of the cargo was lost due to the same reason.

By the end of December it had become evident, that the tanker  
"Tuapse" could not render effective help to the tanker "Mariupol".  
It was decided to send the shallow-sitting tanker "Menets" and  
trawler "Paltus", but these ships approached the place of the ship-  
wreck only on January 10, 1944 because of the hindrances on the part  
of the Japanese authorities.

The Japanese authorities acted in such manner, as to prevent  
the possibility of rendering help to the damaged ship as long as  
possible, so that the Soviet government would abandon the thought  
of rescuing the ship, and would leave the tanker and the cargo in  
the Japanese territorial waters. After the shipwreck of the tanker

"Mariupol" on November 14, 1943, the Japanese military authorities headed by the head of the rescuing party Namiki Hideo visited the tanker on the following day, i.e. on November 15 at 8-9 hours. They carefully looked through the ship, searched the crew and put seals on binoculars and the radiocabin. The Japanese officers leaving the ship left on the tanker a guard detachment under a junior officer. Besides, Captain Alekseev was forbidden to start the machine and that prevented him from the possibility to get off the shoal by his own efforts. This clearly shows that the Japanese rescue detachment not only had no wish to render help to the shipwrecked tanker but even robbed it of the possibility to use its own machine to save the ship.

During their first visit to the tanker "Mariupol" on November 15, 1943 the Japanese proposed to Captain Alekseev to draw up an act to the effect that it was absolutely impossible to take the tanker off the shoal and to save it. They proposed to take off the crew and leave the tanker. They persistently and several times made similar proposals to the Captain of the tanker "Thapss" Scherbachev, while negotiating with him. They told him that the tanker was in a hopeless condition and offered to render help to Captain Alekseev on condition the tanker "Mariupol" would be towed to a Japanese port.

In their advising letters to Captain Alekseev dated November 21 and December 2, 1943 officers Watanabe, Yasumasa and Namiki, Hideo said that in case the crew would not be taken off the tanker "Mariupol" in the manner proposed by them, they would not be responsible for its safety.

It is clear that the Japanese authorities showed hostile attitude towards the tanker's crew. On November 21-22, 1943, all store of drinking water on the tanker was finished.

Captain Alekseev made a request to the Japanese asking them to bring water for the crew. On November 23 a Japanese Kawasaki-boat brought 6 barrels of fresh water to the tanker. This water had a flavour of kerosine and could not be used for drinking.

On December 28, 1943 the administrative office of the sea fleet in Vladivostok received a report that the Japanese government permitted a group of our specialists to visit the tanker "Mariupol" for the first time to examine its condition. Nevertheless Namiki, Hideo, Commander of the so-called rescue detachment, seeing that even after the storms the condition of the tanker "Mariupol" still gave hope, began to interrupt the examination of the wrecked ship. Captain Scherbachev on November 29, 1943 at 15 hours was permitted to visit Captain Alekseev under the guard and escort of the Japanese officers. The examination of the ship was forbidden, and the meeting with Captain Alekseev was under such conditions that it was impossible to get the full information of the tanker and condition necessary to render help.

The above mentioned facts are absolutely true, and therefore it is possible to say that the Japanese authorities were against rendering help to the tanker "Mariupol" to save the cargo and the ship. Pursuing their own interests the Japanese openly wanted the tanker to perish, and by their actions prevented the saving of the ship until it was in absolutely hopeless condition. It was quite possible to take the tanker "Mariupol" off the shoal and to save its cargo, under the condition of the Japanese favorable attitude and if the Japanese would not have prevented our ships to approach the wrecked tanker for so long a time.

Chief Military Prosecutor  
for the Sea and River Fleet of the USSR  
Major-General of the judicial corps

The copy correct

(Schitovich)

(Taranenko)

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE DOCUMENT:

I, V. T. Tarkhov, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with the Russian and English languages; and the above is a correct and true translation of the indicated Document.

Signature: (Signed) V. Tarkhov

Chief Military Prosecutor  
for the Sea and River Fleet of the USSR  
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